



**DRAFT REGIONAL TRANSPORT STRATEGY
PUBLIC EXAMINATION**

**WRITTEN SUBMISSION
FOR**

SESSION A: STRATEGY AND MONITORING

Question 1

Is the overall Invest and Manage strategy (including vision and objectives) consistent with national policy and with RPG9? Are the implications for the environment, economy and social inclusion adequately reflected?

1. Notwithstanding the fact that the transport chapter had been prepared within the context of the national policy framework set out in the Government's 1998 Transport White Paper, in publishing RPG9 the Secretary of State identified the need for an early review of the transport chapter. The primary purpose of this review would be to enable the transport policies and proposals to be updated and revised to reflect the guidance on Regional Transport Strategy (RTS) set out in Planning Policy Guidance 11 (PPG11): Regional Planning.
2. The review of the RTS has been undertaken on the basis that the development principles and overall strategy underpinning RPG9 remained unaltered. The overarching vision for RPG9 set out by the Secretary of State is the need to bring about an urban renaissance in order to improve the quality of life for those in urban areas and to protect the countryside.
3. RPG9 identifies a number of regionally and sub-regionally important areas. These include priority areas for economic regeneration, areas for major growth, as well as areas in which the pressures are ones that are associated with a successful economy. The draft RTS being considered by this Public Examination sets out the role of the transport system in support of delivery of this overall strategy, including its spatial and environmental policies. The draft RTS does not therefore repeat or duplicate existing policies and proposals already set out elsewhere in RPG9.
4. Although the time horizon for the draft RTS remains the same as for RPG9, i.e 2016, the opportunity has been taken to identify some of the key issues and policy directions that will need to be considered in greater detail as part of the roll forward of the RTS through the work on the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS).
5. The draft RTS must recognise the reality that maintaining the economic performance of the region is critical for the UK economy as a whole; something that is recognised in both RPG9 and the Regional Economic Strategy. Competition for investment in a global economy rests not with other regions in the UK but across Europe. A high quality transport system is a catalyst to ensuring our region can compete effectively. However, we cannot, and must not, ignore the adverse impact that our current pattern of movement has on our natural and built environment. Nor can we ignore the fact that our current pattern of investment in the transport system all too often serves to reinforce social inequities. In its 2002 report entitled "European Best Practice in Delivering Integrated Transport" the Commission for Integrated Transport highlighted the relatively poor performance of the UK in achieving a truly integrated and socially inclusive transport system.

6. In setting a vision to deliver a transport system that matches the standards of the best in North West Europe the draft RTS provides a clear focus for the ensuing policy framework that is relevant to the experience of both business and private citizens, as well as one that is consistent with the overarching vision for RPG9. As part of the refinement of the implementation plan for the draft RTS the Regional Assembly is commissioning a benchmarking study of comparable European regions. This work will inform future monitoring of the RTS and any revision to the RTS required as part of the work on the RSS.
7. The current transport chapter of RPG9 has been criticised on a number of accounts, in particular its failure to:
 - take account of the wider policy framework set out within RPG9;
 - adopt an objective led approach;
 - adopt an integrated approach to the development of the transport system serving the region; and
 - provide guidance that is specific to the needs and requirements of the region.
8. The draft RTS addresses these weaknesses by translating the transport vision into a set of regionally specific objectives that integrate spatial and transport planning at the regional level. The resulting policies and proposals provide a much stronger context within which the relative roles of each transport mode can be assessed and a co-ordinated programme of investment developed at the local level, with particular emphasis on the need to identify investment priorities for the sub-regional areas identified by the Secretary of State in RPG9.
9. Although the overall strategy for the region was fixed in RPG9 the development of the draft RTS needed to consider where an appropriate policy emphasis might lie. For some stakeholders the belief in the ability of technological and infrastructure solutions might support a view that an investment-led strategy was capable of delivering the RTS objectives. For others, the belief that a combination of attitudinal and behavioural change, coupled to the enhancement of the network of public transport services, might support a view that delivering the RTS objectives was a question of managing the transport system as a whole more effectively.
10. In reality a combination of investment and management is required in order to deliver the objectives for the RTS. Although one might argue that this conclusion is no more than a repeat of current national policy, this underplays the importance of articulating the arguments within a regional policy document such as the draft RTS, in so far as it provides a long-term planning framework that is detached from the potential dangers of short-term changes in policy emphasis that might take place at a national level.
11. An integral element of the work undertaken to develop the Invest and Manage strategy was to subject it to a sustainability appraisal. The appraisal framework used by the Regional Assembly in order to assess all of the partial reviews currently

underway, was developed from the region's Sustainable Development Framework. An appraisal of the 2002 consultation draft of the RTS concluded that an appropriate balance had been achieved between the economic, environmental and social aspects of sustainable development. Upon the advice of the Government Office, a further appraisal of the draft RTS before this Examination was not undertaken as the basis of the strategy remained substantially unaltered from the earlier consultation draft.

12. Subsequent to the submission of the draft RTS to the Secretary of State the publication of the Social Exclusion Unit's (SEU) report Making the Connections served to highlight the inequalities inherent within the current pattern of investment in the transport system. The draft RTS sets out a framework that encourages a re-balancing of the transport system to reduce car dependence. As such its vision provides a sound basis on which to implement the SEU's recommendations. The RSS will provide an opportunity to develop more strongly the policy linkage between spatial planning and transport planning as a means of tackling social inclusion.
13. Although the draft RTS has a larger number of policies than the current transport chapter in RPG9, it remains a concise articulation of the regional policy framework required to address the weaknesses identified with the current transport chapter of RPG9.

Question 2

Does the strategy make provision for an appropriate balance of travel by car/lorry and by other more sustainable modes?

14. Ultimately the balance to be struck between the various modes of travel, and indeed the balance between travel reduction and managing an individual's desire for mobility, is one that can only be determined at the local level.
15. Fundamental to the delivery of the objectives of the draft RTS is the requirement to rebalance the transport system such that car dependence is reduced. This focus is essential if the overall vision for RPG9, with its emphasis on urban renaissance, is to be successfully delivered. The spatial distribution of land uses, and the mix of land uses and design, that are associated with the urban renaissance agenda will change the nature of future demand for travel and the way in which the transport system will need to be developed. The transport hub forms one of the basic building blocks underpinning the draft RTS, providing the opportunity to focus the development of quality transport services in a way that supports the spatial strategy.
16. Realising the opportunity that spatial strategy provides to rebalance the transport system requires the concept of mobility management to be embraced as an integral element of the RTS policy framework. This requires the adoption of an integrated approach to investment in, and management of, the transport system that will

enable the link between economic growth and the growth in car-based traffic to be gradually broken, while at the same time increasing the overall level of accessibility to goods and services.

17. The draft RTS places a strong emphasis on the need to bring forward measures that should, over time, achieve a significant change in the overall pattern of movement, with a higher proportion of journeys being undertaken on foot, by cycle and especially public transport. The Regional Assembly's Strategic Transport Model (STM) has served to highlight that the greatest opportunity to rebalance the transport system lies in developing the coach and bus sector, an opportunity that a number of the MMS have also highlighted (a briefing note on the STM has been submitted to this Public Examination). The development of the RSS will provide an opportunity to refine the guidance provided in the draft RTS with regards to the role of each mode as part of a truly integrated transport system that supports delivery of the spatial strategy.

Question 3

Are the proposed headline indicators an adequate basis for monitoring the delivery of this strategy? What broad targets would assist this process? Are the proposed arrangements for monitoring adequate?

18. Monitoring and targets form an integral of the regional planning framework and are the mechanism through which the performance of the overall strategy can be assessed.
19. An initial review of available data sets focused on understanding the nature of the information collected, its format and potential to contribute to the monitoring of the draft RTS. In identifying potential data sets reference was made to the region's Sustainable Development Framework (SDF), the Regional Economic Strategy (RES), the Government's 10 Year Transport Plan and work already underway as part of the Local Transport Plan monitoring regime. PPG11 advises that regional monitoring must make full use of existing monitoring arrangements so that common data sets are used to contribute to the use of clear and relevant information at the regional level.
20. The review of available data sets highlighted two key deficiencies: namely a lack of consistency in the way the data is collected and a lack of available time series data. The inconsistency between data sets reflects the considerable flexibility previously given to local transport authorities in establishing their own targets and monitoring regimes. While this flexibility has allowed them to establish monitoring regimes that are appropriate to local circumstances, it makes for comparative assessment extremely difficult not just at a local level, but also at regional and national level.
21. Drawing upon the results of this initial review, the draft RTS identifies six headline indicators that it is proposed will be used for monitoring purposes. These

indicators form part of the wider RPG9 and SDF monitoring processes and feed directly into the annual monitoring report published by the Regional Assembly.

22. The main focus of the work in the short term lies in refining the detail of the proposed headline indicators. This will require discussions to take place with the relevant bodies that will ultimately lead to the collection and aggregation of sound and robust data for the region on a consistent basis that addresses the deficiencies identified with the current monitoring regime. Particular attention will need to be given to ensuring that within sub-regional areas data is collected on a consistent basis across Local Transport Plan boundaries.
23. The guidance from the Government is clear; the draft RTS should not merely repeat national targets. At present the lack of consistent baseline data coupled with the lack of time series data precludes the setting of meaningful regionally specific targets. However, the headline indicators have been specifically selected in a format that will subsequently enable such targets to be set at a later stage in the process.
24. We believe that the Government must now give a firm lead on improved data collection and put in place measures to achieve compliance by both national and local bodies.

June 2003